Round 2: Readers supp

The real issue is legal equality

YOU PUBLISHED 10 letters (July 1), nine of them from women, regarding Ramona Santorelli's action on June 21 in defiance of a law which blatantly discriminates against women.

The letters curiously supported this discrimination by overtly ignoring the stated intention of Santorelli and the other women — to raise awareness of an issue that extends far beyond that of the right to bare one's chest in public.

Only one issue should be considered in light of this challenge to law: Can a statute be allowed to stand when, contrary to the Constitution, it applies or is applied to one sex and not to the other?

Some of the letter writers failed to deal at all with this central point. For example, Dorothy Livadas wrote: "It is difficult for me to believe that erasing such a law would help solve society's unhealthy preoccupation with sex."

Sex is precisely not the issue here. Sexual difference, as the law views it, is. Our sexuality, male and female, should not be used as a means to suppress the rights of one half of the population.

This point leads into Gladys R. Beaty's letter: "I do not think it is right that they (the protesters) expect and want to be arrested so they can take legal action. Not a very good American thought, is it?"

One wonders if this writer can possibly be serious. The right to assembly and to force legal action is fundamental to our civil rights. Without it, all social protest would be weakened if not crippled. This country owes the integrity of its social conscience to those who, like Susan B. Anthony, not only risked but demanded arrest.

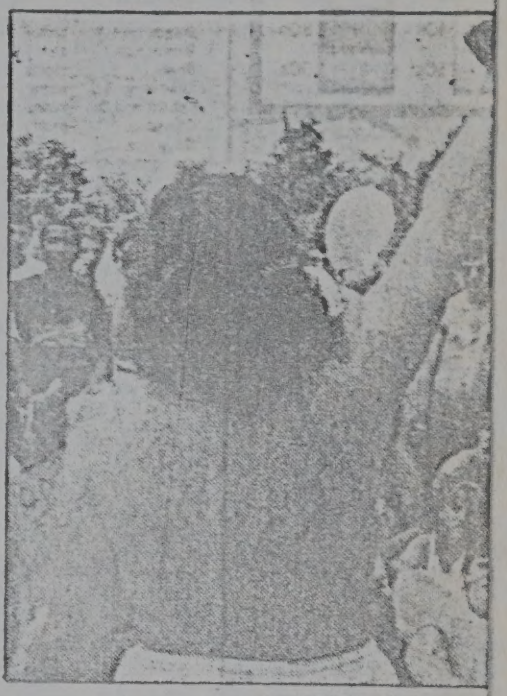
While the greater question here concerns legalities, the underlying principle is that of equality of difference. Admittedly it is a concept difficult to grasp in a world which places woman in second place, devalues her difference as well as her sameness, and in the name of law, exercises the "right" to deny to her what it "naturally" accords to her brothers.

Is it a "good American thought" to combat such denial by legal means? Indeed it is!

Robert L. Mazzola Rochester

End sexist culture

LET'S FACE IT squarely and honestly for once. The majority of our lawmakers are men. They have always been in the position to dictate to women how they should behave emotionally and physically.



Nikki Craft baring her chest in front of cr

Need proof? Look at the abortion issue, the treatment of women rape victims, battered women, and the sexual abuse of girl children.

Think about the fact that women are "allowed" to go topless at bars patronized by men solely for the purpose of male pleasure. Think about the fact that rape is not a sexual crime but a violent, misogynist (woman-hating) crime. All women who are raped and tortured by men are fully clothed.

What that group of women did at Cobb's Hill was brave and admirable. It also placed them in grave personal risk.

For our planet to survive, all sexist culture must cease.

Lori Matocha Rochester

Educate the gawkers

I COMMEND Nikki Craft (June 22) for her vision of a society free from sexual basis and her efforts, however fruitless, to achieve that vision.

But I do not agree with her method and believe that she is off the mark in her reasoning. Men and women are primarily sexual beings and breasts are an outward sign of that sexuality. The mistake comes from over-emphasizing anyone's or anything's sexual role, be it a woman or man.

Ms. Craft's efforts should focus on the re-education of attitudes. It is difficult for

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